

Message

From: Suzie Canales [suziecanales@att.net]
Sent: 2/21/2012 10:59:21 PM
To: Jeannine [Hale/R6/USEPA/US@EPA]; Sherri [White/DC/USEPA/US@EPA]; sherriwhite [sherriwhite@yahoo.com]
Subject: RE: brief background on local EJ issues

Thank you for catching that Jeannine! I meant to say Thursday.

From: Jeannine Hale [mailto:Hale.Jeannine@epamail.epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2012 8:23 AM
To: Suzie Canales; Sherri White; 'sherriwhite'
Subject: Re: brief background on local EJ issues

Suzie
The call is on my calendar for Thursday- just checking what you have down
J
Sent by EPA Wireless E-Mail Services

From: "Suzie Canales" [suziecanales@att.net]
Sent: 02/20/2012 08:34 PM CST
To: Sherri White; "sherriwhite" <sherriwhite@yahoo.com>
Cc: Jeannine Hale
Subject: brief background on local EJ issues

Hi Sherri, I hope it's not too late to send this. I've been working to cut it down in size so that it's not too lengthy. Talk with you Friday. Suzie

Corpus Christi's Refinery Row is a 10 mile stretch of heavy industry containing the largest cluster of major oil refineries in the United States. Located in this immense industrial district are classic Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. According to the 2000 census, the vast majority of the EJ residents along refinery row are people of color and low-income.

One such community, the Hillcrest community was originally affluent; however, in the late 1930s the refineries begin to be built in this eastern end of what is now referred to as refinery row, in turn, residents of this affluent community begin to move away from the heavy industry and the City zoned the area for African-Americans – a classic environmental racist situation.

The coming decades brought more refineries, supporting chemical plants and other facilities and additional communities sprung up in close proximity to industry, communities like Dona Park and Academy Heights. In the 1970s IH 37 was built. This compounded the problems for the refinery row residents as the highway methodically cut off these communities from the rest of Corpus Christi.

For several decades these communities have had to endure more than their fair share of pollution, health problems, explosions, fires, smoking flares, vibrations, contaminated groundwater and petroleum coke in their homes and property. Moreover most of the facilities store and use the deadly chemical hydrogen fluoride, a chemical capable of

creating another Bhopal catastrophe. Because of events at neighboring facilities involving the release of HF, people live in constant fear of dying due to a release of this highly toxic chemical.

Through the years the topic of buy-outs has come and gone. In the late 1990s one fence-line community, the Oak Park Triangle community, was relocated by Citgo refinery, but still Hillcrest, Dona Park and Academy Heights and Tuloso Rd. remain.

It is our obligation to ensure that the residents of the EJ communities along refinery row that desire to relocate away from heavy industry at a fair price, be able to do so. Dr. Al Armendariz, US EPA Regional Administrator for Region 6 deemed that these communities are located too close to heavy industry ^[i]and that they bear more pollution than people that live away^[ii]. The face of Corpus Christi's north side where refinery row is located will soon change due to the construction of a new Harbor Bridge. The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDot) cites one of the desired outcomes of building a new bridge that is higher in elevation than the existing one is to help local industry expand by bringing in larger ships^[iii]. Therefore, the environmental fate for these already overburdened communities is bleak when you consider the cumulative impact of living by an expanding industrial district and the additional noise and pollution the new Harbor Bridge will inevitably bring.

^[i] Spruill, Rick, Corpus Christi Caller-Times March 13, 2011

^[ii] Barajas, Michael, Current, November 22, 2011

^[iii] Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Harbor Bridge Project, January 11, 2012